



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



## HONORING OUR PATRIOTS

SDDVA and Pennington County VSOs had a great presence at Rapid City Main Street Square last Thursday.

Main Street Square hosted "Honoring Our Patriots" night during their summer concert which honored active duty, veterans, and emergency responders.

VA Black Hills Health Care System had booths on homelessness, women veterans services, suicide prevention, healthcare and transitioning.

Outreach events like this afford our team the opportunity to visit one-on-one with veterans and their families regarding benefits and services.

The Pennington County team included Jamie Guffey and Alex Purcell. SDDVA's team included Secretary Larry Zimmerman and Field Officers Will Huffmon and Kevin Bowen.

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The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it is resuming full operations of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. The resumption follows an April 17 decision to temporarily suspend certain clinical revocations from the program to conduct a strategic review aimed at strengthening the program.

The VA's three-month review indicated a need for better communication about clinical revocations, improved internal processes and procedures, and additional staff training.

The VA also conducted mandatory staff training on the new directive and implemented standardized communications and outreach materials to educate veterans and caregivers about the program.

are understood and that, where needed, new, or additional, assistance is explored. The VA is committed to listening to the voices of those who care for veterans of all eras and to collaborating to improve services, outreach and awareness.

More information on the program is available at [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov).



# PURPLE HEART RECOGNITION DAY IN SOUTH DAKOTA

At the request of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, Gov. Dennis Daugaard has proclaimed Monday, Aug. 7, 2017, as "Purple Heart Recognition Day," calling on all South Dakotans to honor those men and women who are recipients of the Purple Heart Medal.

"While we are grateful to all of those who have served our nation, the 7th of August is a day designated to remember and recognize the sacrifices endured by those members of the Armed Forces of the United States who have been awarded the Purple Heart Medal," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "It is fitting to set aside a day to recognize those who have been awarded for their extraordinary sacrifices."

The Governor encourages all South Dakotans to set aside time on Aug. 7 to honor our soldiers who have been honored with the Purple Heart. "The men and women serving in our Armed Forces are tough, determined, courageous and capable of unbelievable acts of courage and sacrifice," said Gov. Daugaard.

"Our military remains as strong as it has ever been. America's veterans have been defined by the virtues of selfless service, sacrifice and devotion to duty," said Zimmerman. "These men and women, who serve and have served, are the flesh and blood of American exceptionalism."

## Executive Proclamation

### State of South Dakota Office of the Governor

*Whereas*, The people of South Dakota have great admiration and the utmost gratitude for all the men and women who selflessly served their country and this state in the armed forces; and,

*Whereas*, Veterans have paid the high price for freedom by leaving their families and communities and placing themselves in harm's way for the good of all; and,

*Whereas*, The contributions and sacrifices of the men and women from the state of South Dakota who served in the Armed Forces have been vital in maintaining the freedoms and way of life enjoyed by our citizens; and,

*Whereas*, Many men and women have given their lives while serving in the Armed Forces; and,

*Whereas*, Many citizens of our state have been awarded the Purple Heart Medal, as a result of being wounded while engaged in combat with an enemy force, construed as a singularly meritorious act of essential service; and,

*Whereas*, By South Dakota statute, August 7 has been designated as the day in which to remember and recognize South Dakota veterans who are recipients of the Purple Heart Medal:

*Now, Therefore, I, Dennis Daugaard*, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim August 7, 2017, as

## PURPLE HEART DAY

in South Dakota, and I ask all South Dakotans to honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's men and women in uniform wounded or killed by the enemy while serving to protect the freedoms enjoyed by all Americans.



*In Witness Whereof*, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Twelfth Day of July in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Seventeen.

*Dennis Daugaard*  
Dennis Daugaard, Governor

Attest:

*Shantel Krebs*  
Shantel Krebs, Secretary of State



## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BAND TO PERFORM IN BRANDON

The United States Air Force Heartland of America Band will be performing Sunday, August 27, at 2:00 PM at the Brandon Valley Performing Arts Center (301 South Splitrock Boulevard).

For ticket information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/usaf-heartland-of-america-band-in-brandon-sd-tickets-36558788320?aff=es2>



Doors will open to ticket holders 45 min. before the show starts. Non-ticket holders will be allowed entrance ten minutes prior to the start of the show.

## THUNE URGES PRIORITIZATION OF VETERANS CRISIS LINE ON VA WEBSITE

This week, Sen. John Thune urged the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary David Shulkin to more prominently feature the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL), a suicide crisis telephone line for veterans, families of veterans, and military personnel, on VA.gov. Specifically, it recommends that the VCL be given a dedicated button that is immediately identifiable upon visiting the VA's website, including its mobile version, or displayed in the first of four rotating banners (as opposed to the second). Thune hopes this modest change could make the VA's resources more readily identifiable to veterans who have decided to turn to help, when seconds count the most, and reduce the rate of 20 daily veteran suicides.

Last September, Thune introduced the Senate companion to the now-enacted No Veterans Crisis Line Call Should Go Unanswered Act, legislation directing the VA secretary to improve the response time and performance of the VCL. Sadly, the crisis of veteran suicides has persisted despite the VA's attention, but some veterans have stepped up to help their brothers and sisters and arms outside of the VA.

This includes South Dakota native Army Major Christopher Mercado, who Thune had the pleasure of meeting at a 2016 Memorial Day service in Sioux Falls and again in July 2017. Mercado was recently in Washington, D.C., to receive the Military Times' 2017 Army Service Member of the Year award for his cofounding of the Objective Zero Foundation, a nonprofit that helps connect veterans to suicide prevention resources. Thune applauds all such efforts that seek to reduce the epidemic of veteran suicide.

The Veterans Crisis Line is a critical resource for veterans in crisis and their family and friends. Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1 or send a text to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

## GUESS WHO'S BACK!!!!

Terry Cousins tried to retire, but the Tripp County Commission encouraged him to come back and continue his role as the Tripp County Veterans Service Officer.

Terry has agreed to come back and will work Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8:00—5:00. His contact information is as follows: phone number: 605.842.1300 and email address is: [terrycvet@msn.com](mailto:terrycvet@msn.com).

Terry will be joining us at the upcoming SDDVA Benefits School.

Welcome back Terry!!!!



## HENDERSON JOINS SDDVA TEAM

Michelle Henderson has joined the SDDVA team and will serve as one of our claims examiners in the Sioux Falls office.

Michelle grew up in Hartford, SD and attended Southeast Technical Institute. She received her Associate's Degree in business and then joined the Air Force where she was stationed at Cannon AFB,

Upon her return back to South Dakota, Michelle worked for Wells Fargo for four years and obtained her Bachelor's Degree in business from Bellevue University.

Michelle is very excited to have this opportunity to work with veterans and their family.

Michelle's email address is: [michelle.henderson@va.gov](mailto:michelle.henderson@va.gov).





## CHARLES MIX AND DOUGLAS COUNTY HOSTS BURIAL BENEFITS WORKSHOP

Charles Mix and Douglas County Veterans Service Officers Todd Breen and Fred Kuil hosted a "Burial Benefits" briefing in Lake Andes this week. SDDVA Field Officer Kevin Bowen was on hand to discuss veterans burial benefits and pension.

Other topics presented were trusts, pre-planned funerals, burial benefits and Title 19.



## STATEMENT BY VA SECRETARY DAVID SHULKIN — PASSAGE OF THE FOREVER GI BILL

Congress has spoken with a strong voice in support of our veterans. The Forever GI Bill expands the success our veterans have had with the GI Bill providing opportunities that otherwise would not be possible.

In particular, it restores benefits to veterans who were impacted by school closures since 2015 and has special benefits for our reservists, surviving dependents, and Purple Heart recipients. This nation is stronger when our veterans are studying and working next to their civilian counterparts.

Passage of this bill is a win for veterans and their families.





THERE IS NO SINGLE TRUTH IN WAR

# THE VIETNAM WAR

A FILM BY KEN BURNS & LYNN NOVICK

 **PBS** | [pbs.org/vietnamwar](https://pbs.org/vietnamwar) | [#VietnamWarPBS](https://twitter.com/VietnamWarPBS) |  **SDPB**  
South Dakota  
Public Broadcasting

Bank of America, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, PBS, David H. Koch, The Blavatnik Family Foundation, Park Foundation, The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Ford Foundation Just Films, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and Members of The Better Angels Society. Jonathan & Jeannie Lavine, Diane & Hal Brierley, Amy & David Abrams, John & Catherine Debs, Fullerton Family Charitable Fund, The Montrose Family, Lynda & Stewart Resnick, The Golkin Family Foundation, The Lynch Foundation, The Roger & Rosemary Enrico Foundation, Richard S. & Donna L. Strong Foundation, Bonnie & Tom McCloskey, Barbara K. & Cyrus B. Sweet III, The Lavender Butterfly Fund



Vietnam Veterans are invited to  
a special preview of

# THE VIETNAM WAR

Wednesday, August 16  
6pm - Pierre Ramkota



# Upcoming Events

Aug 5—American Legion State Auxiliary President Elvira Rose Homecoming—Post 17—1:00 pm (CT)  
Aug 6—Freedom Ride Poker Run—Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home—Hot Springs—8:30 am (MT)  
Aug 10—Veterans Town Hall Meeting—Senior Center—Aberdeen—6:00 pm (CT)  
Aug 10-13—The Vietnam Wall—I-90 Information Center—Chamberlain  
Aug 14-17—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre—Ramkota  
Aug 16—Sioux Falls VA Show and Shine—VA Parking Lot—5:30 pm (CT)  
Aug 16—Screening of the Vietnam War Documentary—Ramkota—Pierre - 6:00 pm (CT)  
Aug 31—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair  
Sept 2—DAV and 727th 13th Annual Poker Run—Brookings  
Sept 8 NCPVA Pistol Shoot—Badlands Gun Range (1600 W. Russell Street—Sioux Falls)  
Sept 8-10—PVA Trap Shoot—Crooks Gun Club—Sioux Falls  
Sept 11—Doug Brown Memorial Pheasant Hunt (Top Gun Hunting Ranch—Howard)  
Sept 11—VA Black Hills Mental Health Summit  
Sept 22 Homeless Veterans Stand Down—VFW Post—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)  
Sept 24—Gold Star Mothers Day  
Sept 25-28 National Women Veterans Art Exhibit—VA Sioux Falls  
Sept 25-26—Aim to Win—Hunters Pointe Shooting Complex—Humboldt  
Sept 29—Women Veterans Conference—Central Baptist Church—Sioux Falls  
Oct 6-8—Fall VFW Conference—Oacoma—Cedar Shores  
Oct 7—Homecomings for VFW State Commander Williamson and VFW State Auxiliary President Alm—Cedar Shores—Oacoma—6:00 pm (CT)  
Nov 4—Public Agent Orange Forum—Meade County Court House in Sturgis (2nd Floor Commissioners Chambers—1300 Sherman Street) 9:00 am and 1:00 pm (MT)  
Nov 9-13—VFW Disabled Veterans Hunt—Gettysburg  
Nov 11-12—Sea of Goodwill Equine Experience Retreat—Joy Ranch—Watertown

## 2018

Jan 28-29—VFW Legislative Conference—Ft. Pierre  
Feb 16-18 American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma  
Jun 7-10—American Legion State Convention—Spearfish  
Jun 14-17—VFW State Convention—Sioux Falls

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